

SPECIAL PRESS RELEASE

RELEASED: October 10, 2003

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CROP PRODUCTION - OCTOBER 2003

COLORADO HIGHLIGHTS

Colorado's corn for grain production is now forecast at 139.1 million bushels, up 24 percent from last year's drought reduced crop of 112.3 million bushels and up 11 percent from the September 1 forecast. Average yield is forecast at 148.0 bushels per acre, down eight bushels from last year's results, but one bushel above the September 1 forecast. Warm and dry weather in September was favorable for final development of corn. Area intended for grain was increased to 940,000 acres, up from the earlier forecast of 850,000 acres based on Farm Service Agency (FSA) administrative information. Sorghum for grain production for 2003 is now expected to total 6.7 million bushels, down 11 percent from the September 1 forecast but almost four times the drought affected 2002 crop. Average yield is now forecast at 32.0 bushels per acre, up two bushels from the September 1 forecast and 12 bushels above last year. Based on FSA information, the area expected to be harvested for grain is now estimated at 210,000 acres, more than double the 90,000 acres harvested for grain in 2002, but down 40,000 acres from the previous forecast. Sugar beet production is forecast at 646,000 tons, down 19 percent from the previous year's crop. Per acre yields are expected to average 23.5 tons per acre compared with 20.1 tons per acre achieved last year. The area for harvest is expected to total 27,500 acres, down from 39,500 acres harvested last year. The initial forecast of all sunflower production was placed at 109.1 million pounds, up 82 percent from the revised 2002 crop of 60 million pounds. The average expected yield of 1,020 pounds per acre is 270 pounds above last year. Area for harvest is estimated at 107,000 acres, up 34 percent from 80,000 acres harvested a year ago. Alfalfa hay production is forecast at 3.0 million tons, up from 2.3 million tons produced last year. All other hay production is forecast at 1.4 million tons, almost twice the production achieved last year. Expected dry bean production, at 825,000 hundredweight, is down 46 percent from last year. The average expected yield of 1,500 pounds per acre is 670 pounds below the 2002 yield and area for harvest is down 21 percent to 55,000 acres. This year, a good share of the non-irrigated bean acreage is expected to be harvested for beans. Most dryland acreage last year was either lost or not planted due to the drought. This is the lowest harvested acreage of dry beans in Colorado since 1921 and the smallest production since 1937.

UNITED STATES HIGHLIGHTS

Corn production is forecast at 10.2 billion bushels, up 3 percent from last month and 13 percent above 2002. Based on conditions as of October 1, yields are expected to average 142.2 bushels per acre, up 3.7 bushels from September and up 12.2 bushels from last year. If realized, both production and yield would be the largest ever. Both records were set in 1994 when production was estimated at 10.1 billion bushels and the yield was 138.6 bushels per acre. Yields turned out to be higher than expected across much of the Corn Belt and central Great Plains as farmers began to harvest their crops.

Soybean production is forecast at 2.47 billion bushels, down 7 percent from the September forecast and 10 percent below 2002. If realized, this would be the lowest production since 1996. Based on conditions as of October 1, yields are expected to average 34.0 bushels per acre, down 2.4 bushels from September and down 4.0 bushels from 2002. With harvest underway, yields are lower than last month in the Corn Belt and northern Great Plains reflecting the impact of the hot, dry conditions in August and continued mostly dry weather during September.

Sorghum production is forecast at 401 million bushels, down 2 percent from last month but up 8 percent from last year. Based on October 1 conditions, the sorghum yield forecast is 51.0 bushels per acre, unchanged from last month but up 0.3 bushels from 2002. Yield increases from last month are expected in 4 of the top 11 producing states; Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, and Nebraska. These increases are offset by declines in Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Area planted to sorghum for all purposes is estimated at 9.51 million acres, down 3 percent from August and 1 percent from 2002. Area for harvest as grain is forecast at 7.85 million acres, down 2 percent from last month but 8 percent above last year.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

U.S. dry edible bean production is forecast at 23.6 million cwt for 2003, down 3 percent from the August forecast and 21 percent below last year. Harvested acreage is forecast at 1.42 million acres, the same as August but down 18 percent from last year. The average U.S. yield is forecast at 1,665 pounds per acre, a decrease of 52 pounds from the August forecast and 71 pounds below last year.

The first sunflower production forecast for 2003 is 2.62 billion pounds, up 5 percent from 2002 but 23 percent below 2001. Area planted at 2.36 million acres, is up 2 percent from the June estimate but down 8 percent from 2002. Sunflower farmers expect to harvest 2.27 million acres, up 1 percent from June and up 4 percent from the 2002 acreage. The October yield forecast, at 1,152 pounds, is 10 pounds more than the 2002 yield.

Alfalfa and Alfalfa mixtures production, is forecast at 78.5 million tons, up less than 1 percent from the August forecast and 6 percent above 2002. Yields are expected to average 3.34 tons per acre, up 0.03 ton from the August forecast and 0.15 ton from last year. Harvested area is 23.5 million acres, unchanged from the August estimate but up 2 percent from 2002. Other Hay production is forecast at 82.2 million tons, virtually the same as August but up 7 percent from 2002. Based on October 1 conditions, yields are expected to average 2.01 tons, the same as the August forecast but 0.15 ton above last year. If realized, this will be a record high yield. Harvested acreage is estimated at 40.8 million, unchanged from the August estimate but down 1 percent from 2002.

Sugarbeet production is forecast at 29.9 million tons, 3 percent below the September forecast but 8 percent above last year's production. Growers in the 12 sugarbeet-producing states expect to harvest 1.35 million acres. This is virtually unchanged from the September forecast but 1 percent below last year. The yield is forecast at 22.2 tons per acre, 0.6 ton below the September forecast but 1.8 tons above 2002.

The final apple production forecast for the 2003 crop year is 9.35 billion pounds, up 1 percent from the August 1 forecast and 9 percent above 2002. Of the 7 states making October 1 production forecasts, Michigan and New York increased from the August 1 forecast, Pennsylvania and Virginia remained unchanged, while North Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia decreased from August. The Eastern and Central apple producing regions are forecasting increases in production from the August 1 forecast, while the Western region is forecasting a decrease. Compared to 2002, production increases in the Eastern and Central States more than offset decreases in the Western States.